



# Agudas Achim Congregation

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## January 2022 / Tevet–Shevat 5782

**This bulletin has a bit less content due to personal challenges with staff. Thanks for your understanding.**

### FROM THE RABBI

*Esther Hugenholtz*

Dear congregational family,

As you see, you are seeing a more slimmed-down monthly Bulletin before you. As advertised in our weekly email, we are experiencing some issues in the office and are asking for your patience and grace as we resolve them.

The secular New Year normally is a time of revelry, especially when compared with the earnest grandeur and awesome holiness of Rosh haShanah. New Year's Eve is a time to let your hair down and to see the ball drop—quite literally. In the Netherlands, where I am from originally, we have a host of fun New Year's traditions too. We eat 'appleflappen' and 'oliebollen': apple beignets and dough balls, both fried in oil. (The latter, 'oliebollen', may very well be a derivative of sufganiyot or bumuelos that Sephardi Jews took with them to the Netherlands centuries ago!). The Dutch also light an insane amount of fireworks. While in Spain, where I spent a significant part of my childhood, there is the custom of eating twelve whole grapes for the twelve strikes of the midnight clock—trust me, it's a lot harder than you think it is, especially with seeded grapes!

It's been six months now since we've restarted in-person services using the 'hybrid' model, and it has been a balm to the soul to worship, learn and socialize in-person again, albeit with excellent masks.

This New Year, however, we face yet again a year of canceled plans and unpredictable contingencies. 2022 is a mystery, seen through the darkened glass of the continuing pandemic. None of us can predict the future, but what we are equipped to comment on is how we could attempt to face that continued

uncertain time ahead. For instance, synagogue life will continue with the same sense of purpose and community as we have had before.

It's been six months now since we've restarted in-person services using the 'hybrid' model, and it has been a balm to the soul to worship, learn and socialize in-person again, albeit with excellent masks. We have had setbacks and

disappointments and it's important to acknowledge those and grieve what we have lost: in terms of opportunity, community and connection. But we have also gained much: an agility and commitment that makes us more intentional about our Jewishness. The creativity of our Religion School, the camaraderie of our minyan and the steadfastness of our (online) learning programs.

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## FROM THE RABBI

### *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Some things continue to be challenging. Prof. Bob Cargill canceled his Israel Sabbatical which in turn affects our Israel trip, since our itinerary was heavily influenced by his presence. So back to the drawing board we go; but the trip is postponed for now. Omicron proves a wily foe. Other things, however, continue on strong: a new Introduction to Judaism cycle in 2022 (feel free to join us!) as well as interesting new Adult Education opportunities lining up (stay tuned). Our hybrid services continue to see and foster communitarian participation and I am grateful to all our ‘minyanares’—and we even have the occasional out-of-town visitor (with vaccine card in hand, of course). Our lay leaders and staff continue to work diligently and creatively behind the scenes to keep our community going and all of you—the membership—present the core of our mission at the synagogue. We may not see as much of each other as before, but we are still in each other’s hearts.

Meanwhile, I am enjoying my physical proximity to the synagogue. I want to make a proposal. There’s a lovely walking trail between my house and the synagogue. If you want some ‘rabbi schmooze time’, feel free to make an appointment so we can go for a walk! I’m lowan enough by now to just pull on my snowpants and make the best of the January weather. Seriously. Be in touch. It is a pandemic-safe and healthy way to connect to each other. But I can also meet you masked indoors of course.

In the times that we may feel less connected, this community and its people matter most. In my times of private prayer, with admittedly a tear or two on occasion, I give thanks to the Holy One for being Jewish, the wisdom of our tradition, the moral fortitude to keeping each other safe with science and the bonds of community. We have each other. I know I say that a lot. But I say it because it matters and I am grateful for you all.

Bring it on, 2022—we got you. A very happy secular New Year!

## SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

[Streaming link for all Shabbat services on Zoom](#); [click here](#) to sign up for in person attendance

<b>Bo</b> <i>(Exodus 10:1-13:16)</i>	Friday, January 7	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T’filah (Reform)
	Saturday, January 8	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative)
<b>Beshalach</b> <i>(Exodus 13:17-17:16)</i>	Friday, January 14	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T’filah
	Saturday, January 15	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
<b>Yitro</b> <i>(Exodus 18:1-20:23)</i>	Friday, January 21	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T’filah
	Saturday, January 22	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
<b>Mishpatim</b> <i>(Exodus 21:1-24:18)</i>	Friday, January 28	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T’filah
	Saturday, January 29	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem

## DONATIONS

### 2ND CENTURY FUND

**Steven & Barcey Levy**

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

**Tom & Becky Gelman:** In memory of Webster B. and Gloria J. Gelman

**Rody Gessner & Michelle Edwards:** In memory of Lillian Edwards

**Charles & Nicole Pruchno:** In memory of Gladys Pruchno

**Bob & Donna Rodnitzky:** In memory of Nathan Rodnitzky and Ann Rodnitzky

**Jonathan & Pamela Sabin:** In memory of Michael Allan Sabin

**Jonathan & Susan Simon:** In memory of Liba Goldberg, Mendel Goldberg, Irene Simon

### CEMETERY FUND

**Miriam Canter:** In memory of Arthur Canter

**Mark Frankel**

**David Schapira:** In memory of Leo, Mildred & Farel Schapira, Abraham & Gitel Dicker

**Mel & Diane Sunshine:** In memory of Betty Brodsky

### COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret:** In memory of Remi J Cadoret

### FAMILY ASSISTANCE FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

### GARDEN FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

### GENERAL FUND

**David & Constance Berman**

**Jeanne Cadoret**

**Aaron Caplan & Leah Lee:** In honor of David & Joni Caplan

**Caplan Family Foundation**

### GENERAL FUND, CONT.

**Richard Haendel:** In memory of Goldene Haendel

**Lea Haravon Collins & Steve Collins**

**Kathleen Jacobs**

**David & Martha Lubaroff:** In memory of Bessie, Katie, Fannie & Sara

**Bernard Miller:** In gratitude to congregation and Rabbi Hugenholtz & family for warm welcome and hospitality

**Robert & JoAnn Miller**

**Jerry Pritchard:** In honor of Rody Gessner's service to public education

**Warren & Kim Reardon**

**Harriet & Stephen Swartz:** In memory of Goldene Haendel

### LIBRARY FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

### PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

### PRAYERBOOK FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

### REECE FLAUM TERRACE FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

### SAFETY FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

### SISTERHOOD MITZVAH & MEMORIAL FUND

**Jeff & Janet Weingarten:** In memory of Douglas Ginsberg

### TIKUN OLAM FUND

**Jeanne Cadoret**

**Jeanne Cadoret:** for Warm Up America

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Janice Weiner*

Last New Year's Eve, at friends' in Maryland, we cut up slips of paper and wrote down everything from 2020 that we wanted to be rid of. Among two teenagers and three adults, we produced quite a stack. 2020 had been hard. It was cathartic to watch our words go up in flames as we fed them into their fireplace.

It's tempting to do a repeat as we see out 2021, but I'm taking a different tack: I'm writing down on post-it notes the basics that I hope will, in some small measure, improve things. Not exactly resolutions and not too many - I have to be realistic. I'll stick them to a mirror so they face me daily.

They include the mundane - such as "be kind", "be patient, even when it seems impossible" and "breathe". The more important ones will read something like, "expand my worldview", "listen always", and "make an effort to see the world through others' eyes". Of course, there will be the personal improvement ones such as "keep exercising, you know it makes you feel better" and "don't forget to read and play music".

If this all seems sappy - well, you're right - but after nearly two years of pandemic living, granting ourselves some simple pleasures and a bit of sappiness may be what we need. We made it to 2022. Breathe, hug your loved ones, keep going.

## LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

Lauren and Dan Welter of Hopkinton, Iowa announce the birth of their son, Levi Nicholas Welter on 10/10/21. He is welcomed home by siblings Isaac (5 1/2), Clara (3 1/2) and Joshua (20 months). He is the grandson of long-time synagogue members Steven and Barcey Levy. Rabbi Hugenholtz was able to join the family for a bris at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics.



## BOOK REVIEW: 'PEOPLE LOVE DEAD JEWS'

Gary Sanders

The cover of "People Love Dead Jews", by Dara Horn, jumped out at me as I was browsing the "new non-fiction" shelves at the Iowa City Public Library. I skimmed through it and decided I had to read it.

This is a great book. It very well written, with a first person narrative combined with scholarship. Horn presents ideas that I hadn't thought about, and events that made me do more research. Her thesis is that Jews have never been loved (and frequently persecuted) while they were alive, but only became loved after they were dead. Some of the people in the 12 chapters of "beloved Dead Jews" are familiar: Anne Frank; some unfamiliar: the Jews of Harbin, Manchuria.

The chapter "On Rescuing Jews and Others" spurred me to do further research. In this chapter, Horn told the story of Varian Fry, who rescued more than 2,000 people--many of whom were Jewish, from the port city of Marseille, France, from August, 1940, (just after France surrendered to Germany) to September, 1941, when Fry was expelled from France because the U.S. State Department (run by notorious Anti-Semites) and the government of Nazi-controlled Vichy France did not want him rescuing any more people, most of whom had been sneaked through France, Spain and Portugal to the United States.

Fry, who was a Protestant journalist with no background in undercover work, had volunteered in 1940 with an American, non-governmental group, the Emergency Rescue Committee, to try to rescue artists, writers, musicians, and other leading anti-Nazis from Marseille, while evading the ever-watchful eye of the collaborationist Vichy French police and the Gestapo.

After Fry returned to the U.S in 1941, he led a prosaic and often unhappy life. The only recognition he received was in April, 1967, five months before he died. The French Consulate in New York awarded him for his work rescuing French Resistance fighters--who were not even the majority of the those his group rescued.

Finally, in 1993, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum paid tribute to him with an exhibit "Assignment Rescue: The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee". And in 1996 he became the first American to be named "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial.

One of the people who worked for Varian Fry in Marseille was a young American art student from Boston, Miriam Davenport. After World War II she married William Burke, who became a professor at the University of Iowa in 1951.

Professor Burke died in 1961. Miriam married Charles Ebel, a U. Iowa historian, and she did graduate work at U.I. in French art, receiving a Ph.D in 1973. She also taught classes in art and French, and exhibited her paintings and sculptures. She and Charles Ebel left Iowa City in 1973, and she died in Michigan in 1999, requesting to be buried in the countryside near Riverside, Iowa, where she and Ebel had lived.

The Iowa City Public Library, the State of Iowa Historical Society, and the University of Iowa Special Collections Department could not find anything that was written about Miriam Davenport's World War II heroism during the years she lived in Iowa City. Like most people who risked their lives in World War II, Miriam Davenport did not make a big deal out of what she'd done. In today's world, she'd be all over cable television and the internet.

Varian Fry has been relegated to near anonymity. None of my Jewish friends (except for Rabbi Jeff Portman) had ever heard of Varian Fry. In contrast, almost everyone has heard of Oskar Schindler,

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## BOOK REVIEW: 'PEOPLE LOVE DEAD JEWS'

Gary Sanders *(cont.)*

because Steven Spielberg made "Schindler's List" in 1993. "Schindler's List" took in over \$300 million, won 7 Academy Awards, and people have continued to watch it. Schindler saved 1,000 Jews by keeping them working as slave laborers in his factory in World War II. But here's what really upsets me--Schindler, a German, had been an ardent Nazi. He started a factory while living in Czechoslovakia in the late 1930's and he was a member of the Abwehr--the Nazi military counter-intelligence and counterespionage unit. He helped Germany take over Czechoslovakia in the infamous pre-war appeasement by Britain and France. After the war started, he moved his factory to assist in the Nazi occupation of Poland.

The only movie about Varian Fry was a 2001 Showtime Television production "Varian's War". In reviewing it at the time, Smith College Professor Peter Rose called it "terribly over-simplified, sappily romantic, stereotype-laden, and stilted". I tried watching it recently, and turned it off after 15 minutes.

Varian Fry is in only one of the 12 chapters in "People Love Dead Jews". There are 11 other very compelling chapters. Dara Horn, who previously has written five very well received novels, has now written a work of non-fiction that I consider a "must read".

## JANUARY YAHRZEITS

Michael Balch	Judith Goldfein	David Moyer
Charlotte Bernstein	Rose Goldman	Mary S. Naylor
Phyllis Bills	Joseph Greenberg	Hannah Pauline Scheer Berg
David Blum	Irving Gussin	James Robin
Arnie Breggin	Charles Hecht	Dennis Saletta
Jack Joseph Brown	Doris Hoffman	Susan Schechter
James Terrell Bryant	Maurice Joselson	Lama Shetzer
Barbara Jean Bunnell	Sydney Josselson	LaVerne Siebuhr
Helen Chazanoff	Sylvia Kaufman	Edie Singer
Charles Henry Clements	Simone Kay	Betty Snider
Mary Jessie Clements	Pauline A. Kerber	Goldie Solganick
Belle Coster	Shmarya Kleinman	Benjamin Sprince
Sara Dorfman	Lillian Kraft	Isaac Strauss
Lillian Edwards	Boris Kuperman	Gittel Tepper
Sol Elster	Harry Levin	Wayne VanArendonk
Anna Federbusch	Ruth Levy	Janet Whitebook
Marlene Garfin	Marvin Marcus	Maynard "Moe" Whitebook
Gloria Gelman	Arthur Margolin	Rose Widiss
Webster Gelman	Meyer Markovitz	Celia Wolf
Ruth Ginsberg	Tamara Mazur	Earl Yanney
Merrel Goldberg	Edna Irene McGinnis	